FOREST SERVICE

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THE FOREST SERVICE

# History Line

1876 ..... 1971

TO: History Coordinators
Forest Service Personnel

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The Ranger and Ranging. "In the very beginning of the Forest Reserves, back in 1896 or thereabouts, someone decided there should be Forest Rangers since there were already Forest Reserves (Now called National Forests).

The term "ranger" is an ancient one, for William the Conqueror brought it to England from his Normandy (1066), and it is derived from the French verb ranger, to range or rove. And then there were later rangers in the Royal Forests of England, to look after 'the vert and the venison,' that is, they were Game Wardens or Game Keepers. Governor Alexander Spotswood, in 1716, made his famous trip over the Blue Ridge in Virginia--an adventuresome journey for those days. He speaks in his journal of rangers being sent out to forage for venison for his 'Knights of the Golden Horseshoe' and thus colonial Virginia had already brought the term to America.

So, when Federal Forest Reserves came (the English would have called them Royal Forests), we had to have somebody to look after or over them, and so the term Forest Ranger was born, a peculiarly American term.

One of the first Forest Reserves was the Washington, later to be known as the Gifford Pinchot, lying east of Tacoma, Washington, along the Cascade Range. One of the first Forest Rangers, for this or any Forest Reserve, was Edward T. Allen, who had previously been a Tacoma newspaper reporter, and the son of a retired Yale professor.

Allen was appointed as Forest Ranger and told to report to the Forest Superintendent in Tacoma. He did, presenting his letter read it carefully, made some remark that it was good, and then handed it back to Allen.

The Forest Ranger stood waiting to be instructed in the duties of his new job--where he should go, what he should do, how long he should stay, what reports he should make, and the many other duties of a new job.

He asked if this letter was really his appointment as a Forest Ranger, whether it authorized him to perform his duties, and the superintendent remarked that that seemed to be the case. Allen still awaited for instructions.

Finally, realizing that they were not forthcoming, he asked the superintendent just what he was supposed to do and where he was supposed to do it. The elderly superintendent, with some show of annoyance, said--'That letter appoints you as a Forest Ranger, doesn't it? It is signed by the Secretary of the Interior, isn't it? Well, you are now a Forest Ranger--so go out and range!'

And Allen did, hitting for the high country of the Washington Cascades, around Mount Rainier. Here he learned to know the country, its trees, fauna and flora, and that summer worked out his own job. So well, in fact, that he eventually became a valued Forest Inspector and later a Regional Forester and in general charge of all the National Forests of Oregon and Washington, of some 25 million acres."--From the book, Fables for Foresters, by John D. Guthrie, 1953.

A Bit of New History. On March 20, Secretary of Agriculture Butz announced that I would retire April 29, and John McGuire will succeed me as Chief. I announced this decision to my staff that morning. I thought the readers of History Line would be interested in learning this bit of history first hand. I have completed over 41 years in the Forest Service. The past 20 years , I have served in Washington under 5 Administrations. I have been Chief for more than 10 years, a new record of service for this job. There have been good times and rough times, but it has been a pleasure and great privilege to serve throughout.

We have seen great progress in Forest Service programs over this decade. We have demonstrated to all users what multiple-use really means. We have established 98% of the designated wilderness system on National Forest Lands. We have seen goods and services from the National Forests and National Grasslands double and redouble. Our appropriations have grown from 244 million dollars in F.Y. 1962 to 509 million in 1972. I am proud of the way Forest Service people have pulled together to achieve this record.

A part of the tradition of the Forest Service has been its professional Chiefs. It is a source of great satisfaction to me to see this tradition continue. The decade of the 70's--the environmental decade--will make great demands on the New Chief, John McGuire. I am confident of his abilities to get the job done--Edward P. Cliff, Chief.

Associate Chief: A Sense of History. All of us need a sense of history, because it often points the way to the right decision in current, practical matters concerning, for example, management on the National Forests, and in other ways where the problem may be rooted in the past decade or the past century. The Forest Service, has a distinguished history. The more we know of Service history, the better each of us can perform our jobs. For this reason I look forward to the time when the Service itself can teach and inculcate at least the basic outline of Forest Service history in every employee. In this way, we would see this sense of history in our organization pay rich dividends in a better and stronger Forest Service--John R. McGuire.

The Historian Speaks: "History gives perspective. After a tourist has seen the different points of interest in San Francisco, he will wish to visit Telegraph Hill, with its magnificent view of the bay area. At this elevation, the hitherto bewildering topography of the region falls into place and the relation of each detail to the whole may be discerned. History, similarly, is a mountaintop of human knowledge from whence the doings of our own generation may be scanned and fitted into proper dimensions. History enables a person to see himself as part of the living process of human growth which has emerged out of the past and will inexorably project itself out beyond our own lifetime. We are the product of the past--but not the completed product."--A Preface to History by Carl G. Gustavson, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1955.

All Forest Service employees have an opportunity to achieve some of this perspective referred to by reading regularly FOREST HISTORY, the Quarterly Journal of the Forest History Society. A leaflet and membership blanks are being distributed with this issue. Do yourself a favor and sign up. The Forest History Society is carrying on a number of projects now with the WO history branch under cooperative agreements. In forthcoming issues articles will be dealing with FS history. The Society and the Quarterly depend entirely on private gifts and memberships for support. If those who devote their careers and lives to forestry do not support it, where is the support coming from? Your career will be greatly enriched by becoming more knowledgeable in the field of American forest history. Not only that, but you will enjoy it more because you will have put more into it.

Letter from Raymond Marsh to Paul Roberts, Dec. 8, 1957: "I am a nut about the importance of good, permanent, historical records about the Forest Service. I do--how uninformed present FS personnel are of the era you are writing about (Shelterbelt, 1930's), and even later. In recent weeks I have had two inquiries from them about certain events in the Branch of Research that they could not get straight on, but which should have been easily available in the records. Characteristically we (in this country) have a short historical interest both backward and forward, and our concern is for the short term, almost entirely. (This is a cryptic sentence, but I will let it stand.)" This excerpt was sent to the History Office by Dr. Wilmon Droze, Texas Woman's University, who is working under contract with the History Branch to produce a book on the Shelterbelt history, and the letter came from the Paul Roberts' papers.

Raymond Eugene Marsh was long known as one of the grand old men of Federal forestry. He died at age 86, May 31, 1971, in a Spokane, Washington nursing home. Until a few months before his death he had made his home here in Washington at the Cosmos Club. A native of New Hampshire, Ray Marsh began his forestry career in R-3 in 1910, later serving as Supervisor of the Carson and Coconino NFs, and then became Assistant District forester in 1919. Later moving on to the WO, he became Assistant Chief in 1936, and held this post until he retired in 1950. In a long and distinguished career, he was in charge of many special projects for the Service, and was honored by a number of foreign governments for his achievements in forestry. Many of those in WO, I&E, will recall his coming in often to look at old Chief's Reports in some historical research project he was engaged in. When I read the excerpted paragraph above, I could not keep from thinking "Ray Marsh is still in there plugging for better history records, and his reminder is most timely!" There is no effort here to single out any segment of the Service, for there is enough neglect of historical files to go around. Unfortunately, it is still true: we are not keeping good historical files! If we expect anyone in the future to tell the story of TODAY'S activities, something will have to be done about this.

Something is being done about it by way of a new history directive (1680) which the History Office now has expert help in drafting. Duncan Giffen, who retired recently as Chief of the Branch of Directives, has volunteered to lend a hand with this job. It goes without saying that the History Branch is most grateful for this assistance. An important segment of the new directive will call for better historical files to be kept by all offices. There will not be a Forest Service history program in operation until this matter can be tightened up and enforced. We might as well face facts: no records of today's events, no accurate history for tomorrow!

Other help is on its way. In an important new initiative, the Forest History Society is beginning a new project to research and compile a comprehensive bibliography of FS historical reference materials. We all know that considerable historical material exists in various places, but no one person or place, including the History Office, has firm knowledge of just how much, where, and what really does exist. This basic document will provide answers to such questions and become an invaluable aid to viable history program thoughout the Service. Not only will a bibliography undergird specific projects now underway, but it will be the springboard and inspiration for numerous others not even recognized yet. In short, this is a landmark project and is a good indicator that the Forest Service takes its history seriously. Sufficient copies will be available for Regional, Area, and Station offices.

History of the Forest Products Laboratory--1910-1963, by Dr. Charles A. Nelson was published in 1971. This is a typed and paper-bound multigraphed edition of the outstanding history of the world-famous Forest Products Laboratory, at Madison, Wisconsin. A fine job of reproduction has been done with this volume and it is easily read. Here, indeed, is a fascinating chapter in the history of American forestry, and any larger study of such history must give highly deserved consideration to the role of products and utilization. The Forest Products Laboratory and its present Director, Dr. H.O. Fleischer, are to be congratulated for taking the initiative and getting this key historical work done and into circulation.

Forest Service Directories needed by History Office. We are in the process of building a complete set, as a valuable tool for the history reference shelf. Employees already retired or those now about to retire may have directories no longer needed.

A donation of them would be a contribution to the history program, and greatly appreciated. They will be kept permanently available to anyone needing to use them. Herbert Storey, retireing April 15, as Associate Deputy Chief for Research, has contributed his collection, 12 of them, which gives us a good start. Herb went further and tipped us off about Gordon Salmond's having a collection. Gordon, now living in Alexandria, Va., retired 11 years ago as Director of Watershed Management, NFS. A phone call stirred him to look at those he had. So, Gordon is generously sending us nearly a complete set. Gordon you are a hero and a scholar to the History Office! He added a note of caution about the notes he may have made on his copies. "Look out," he said, "You may find on one of them something like this, 'I met Owsley today. He may not make it!'"

We were aware that Larry Mays of Atlanta, had a set of directories, but he doesn't want to part with them. He writes, "As you know, I prize them highly, and would like to keep the collection up and in the family. Who knows, maybe one or both of Kent's boys will end up in the Forest Service, and that would be fourth generation Mayses."

Another contribution to the History Office reference shelf has come from Edward A. Johnson, of Watershed Management--six handsomely bound volumes of the semi-annual Watershed Management Research Reports, dating from 1950-1963. Inside, the reports are typewritten, but the nice binding makes for convenient storage, ready and useful reference.

The Division of Manpower & Youth Conservation Programs is beginning to get its History files in order, and a good move it is. Clair Hendee, retired Deputy Chief for Administration, was back in the WO this week writing some of his intimate understanding of how the Job Corp began. Another invaluable contribution to FS history!

The word about a Forest Service History Program and Office is getting around and the office is getting more and more response from those who want to help. Unfortunately, we do encounter a good many people in the WO who have never seen even one copy of History Line. We do ask those of the WO who receive it, to either work out a distribution route or duplicate copies, so that every employee will see it. That's its purpose: to communicate the good news about Forest Service history. It is by now a long and distinguished history--nearly a century--one that every Forest Service man and woman will take pride in.

This issue of History Line could have been a good sized volume, since stacks of notes have been collected in the interval since an issue was published. But it is obvious that such a course is not possible. So, if something has been left out that you hoped to see in it, just bear with us, and if you like, drop us a note. Hopefully, we can cover the important things in subsequent issues which, maybe, will come more rapidly.

History is a bridge between the past and the present, and no one can fully comprehend the present without some knowledge of that which has preceded it.

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